

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 ACDA-05 EB-07 /080 W

----- 012761

R 131711Z MAY 75

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 890

AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 905

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, WB, GE

SUBJECT: BERLIN BOUNDARY RESCUE: DROWNING ON MAY 11

1. SUMMARY: DROWNING OF TURKISH YOUNGSTER IN SPREE
MAY 11 HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON STALLED BOUNDARY RESCUE
TALKS BETWEEN SENAT AND GDR. END SUMMARY.

2. FIVE-YEAR OLD TURKISH BOY DROWNED IN SPREE RIVER
AT APPROXIMATELY 12:30 P.M. ON MAY 11
IN KREUZBERG NEAR OBERBAUMBRUECKE WHERE ENTIRE WIDTH
OF RIVER LIES IN EAST BERLIN. WEST BERLIN FIREMEM WHO
ARRIVED ON SCENE ABOUT FIVE MINUTES AFTER BEING TELEPHONED BY
BYSTANDER WERE DENIED PERMISSION TO SEARCH FOR BODY BY EAST
GERMAN BORDER GUARDS ON PATROL BOAT IN VICINITY, AND
HAD TO RESORT TO PRODING WATER WITH BOAT
HOOKS. FROM TIME CHILD ENTERED WATER HE APPARENTLY
WAS LOST TO VIEW (WATER IS VERY CLOUDY AT THAT POINT)
AND WAS PROBABLY DEAD BY TIME FIRE DEPARTMENT ARRIVED.
FIRE DEPARTMENT DIVERS WHO SUBSEQUENTLY ARRIVED AT
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SCENE WERE ALSO DENIED PERMISSION BY EAST GERMANS TO

ENTER WATER, AND ONLY ABOUT FORTY MINUTES AFTER CHILD FELL IN WATER DID EAST GERMAN PATROL BOAT ARRIVE WITH DIVERS ABOARD. EAST GERMANS RECOVERED CHILD'S BODY AT 2:12 P.M. FROM POINT APPROXIMATELY 6 FEET FROM WHERE HE WAS SEEN ENTERING WATER; BODY WAS TAKEN TO EAST BERLIN.

3. MISSION RESPONDED TO PRESS INQUIRIES MAY 12 IN NAME OF THREE ALLIES EXPRESSING DEEP REGRET THAT THE EAST GERMANS HAD PREVENTED EFFORTS TO SAVE CHILD'S LIFE AND OUR CONCERN THAT EAST GERMANS HAD PLACED POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOVE ABOVE HUMANITARIAN. GOVMAYOR SCHUETZ AND OTHER BERLIN LEADERS HAD PREVIOUSLY ISSUED STATEMENTS CONDEMNING EAST GERMAN ACTION.

PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY NEGATIVE TOWARD GDR. EAST GERMAN PRESS AGENCY ADN REPORTED THAT "DESPITE RESCUE EFFORTS BY BORDER SECURITY PERSONNEL, CHILD HAD ALREADY DROWNED BY THE TIME HE COULD BE FOUND." ADN ARTICLE CRITICIZED SENAT FOR FAILING TO AGREE TO RESCUE AGREEMENT PROPOSED BY GDR.

4. BOUNDARY RESCUE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF INTERMITTENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GDR AND SENAT FOR OVER TWO YEARS. MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT GDR HAS SOUGHT THROUGH UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE (E.G. REFERENCE TO SPREE RIVER AS STATE BORDER BETWEEN CAPITAL OF GDR AND INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ENTITY OF WEST BERLIN) TO MAKE SUCH AGREEMENT INSTRUMENT OF THREE-STATE POLICY. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH SENAT TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD MEET HUMANITARIAN PURPOSE BUT WITHOUT USING TERMINOLOGY IN FLAT CONTRADICTION TO OUR VIEW OF BERLIN AS ONE CITY.

5. AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND RAISED MAY 11 DROWNING WITH AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV DURING LUNCHEON-MEETING MAY 12(SEPTEL), BUT WE ARE KEEPING THIS APPROACH CONFIDENTIAL.

6. SENAT CHANCELLERY CHIEF HERZ ASKED LIAISON OFFICERS DEVOTE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MAY 13 MEETING TO DISCUSS HOW TO PROCEED ON BOUNDARY RESCUE MATTERS, AND SENAT HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL SEEK EARLY DATE FOR RESUMPTION OF TALKS WITH GDR.
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7. CDU CAUCUS, ACCORDING TO TAGESSPIEGEL, PLANS TO INTRODUCE SPREE DROWNING (THERE HAVE BEEN 5 SINCE 1966) AS URGENT QUESTION AT SCHEDULED MEETING OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON MAY 15. SELIGMANN

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